

THE COUNTER REFORMATION

It is 1545. Twenty-eight years have passed since Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. The Reformation has now spread to many countries in Europe -- even to Italy, the homeland of the Roman Catholic Church. This rapid growth of Protestantism has stunned Catholic leaders and has prompted Pope Paul III to call a meeting known as the Council of Trent.

The Pope has asked you to deliver one of the opening day speeches when the council begins its meeting next week. He wants you to talk about two important matters: (1) measures that should be taken to check the spread of Protestantism, and (2) reforms which need to be made to bring about improvements within the Catholic Church.

Your speech should take into consideration a number of important issues:

- (1) Should the Church continue to think of Martin Luther as a heretic?
- (2) Would it be a good idea to bring back the "Inquisition", a Church court of the Middle Ages that tried and often executed heretics?
- (3) Should an "Index of Forbidden Books" be drawn up listing books that are not to be owned, read, or sold because they are "dangerous" to the lives of good Christians?
- (4) Do people need the help of the clergy to explain the Bible?
- (5) Do clergymen have spiritual powers that laymen do not have?
- (6) Should the Pope have the final say in Church matters?
- (7) Are both good works and faith needed to forgive one's sins?
- (8) Is it okay for church officials to continue selling indulgences?
- (9) Should people be allowed to buy Church offices?
- (10) Should seminaries be established to train worthy people to be clergymen?
- (11) At the risk of war, should the Pope side with Catholic states and oppose Protestant states in Europe?
- (12) Does the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) deserve the strong support of the Church for its attempts to win back Protestants to the Catholic Church and for its missionary work in spreading Catholicism to areas outside of Europe?



Your speech should include answers to all of the above questions. In so doing, your speech will set the mood of the "Counter Reformation" -- a movement among Catholics to oppose the spread of Protestantism while at the same time making improvements within the Catholic Church.